ABOUT GROWTH

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Washington State
Department of
Community, Trade and
Economic Development

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Vision statements guide Washougal's GMA Update

By Monty Anderson
Washougal Planning and Development Director

he City of Washougal, a community of 9,775 bordering the Columbia River in Southwestern Washington, based its Growth Management Act Update (GMA Update) on the results of a series of open houses to assess citizens' values about

the community.
Citizens were asked questions such as "What do you like about Washougal?" and "What do you not like about the City of Washougal?"

We learned from these meetings that "our citizens cherish that Washougal has a small-town feel set in a beautiful environment, and they do not

want to lose the quality of life that comes with being a community," said Cherie Kearney, chair of the planning commission. With this information from the community, the foundation was laid for formulating vision statements to guide the planning process.

The vision statements were developed by the city council and planning commission in a series of work sessions. The statements are that Washougal: (I) is an "exceptional Columbia Gorge community"; (2) is characterized by community design features of open spaces, identifiable neighborhoods, and supportive commercial and industrial activities designed to a people scale, which culminates into a small town community; (3) has a downtown that is vibrant and pleasing and which is the city's historical and commercial center; (4) has a multimodal transportation network of interconnections within the city and its neighborhoods and connections to the metropolitan area; and (5) values,

protects, and preserves the community's environmental assets.

The review of the comprehensive plan was done using the vision statements as a guide. Washougal also collaborated with Clark County Community Development and all of the other seven cities in the county.

"I am very pleased that our strategy was to review and not redo our comprehensive plan,"

> said Stacee Sellers, city councilmember and chair of the Downtown Revitalization Implementation Committee. "We made better what was already a good plan (in my opinion) with our update. The formulation of our downtown revitalization plan and its adoption by city council in the



A downtown-visioning workshop is one of the open houses Washougal is using to assess citizens values about the community.

Photo COURTEST OF THE CITY OF WASHOU

middle of this comprehensive plan review was truly phenomenal. Our planning commission deserves great accolades."

In conjunction with Clark County, city staff and leadership reviewed county-wide planning policies, urban growth boundaries, vacant and buildable lands, population, and land use projections. Through the review process, which included 18 public meetings, it was concluded that while the city would not change its boundaries, it would increase its densities to accommodate the 7,806 new residents expected by 2023. Then, the city launched an aggressive review of its infrastructure.

The comprehensive plan update process spanned a period of 29 months beginning in October 2000 and ending in February 2003 with adoption of the city's comprehensive plan.

The adopted plan was forwarded to Clark County for its consideration as part of the

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CTED is the state's lead agency charged with providing financial and technical resources to build livable and sustainable communities.

Juli Wilkerson, CTED Director

CTED administers the state's Growth Management Act. Its role is to assist and enable local governments to design their own programs to fit local needs and opportunities, consistent with the GMA.

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Everett's Boeing 7E7 project and Mill Creek Town Center show benefits of keeping GMA plans, regulations up to date

Bv Leonard Bauer Managing Director, CTED's Growth Management Services



s I've had the opportunity to travel throughout Washington, I continue to be impressed with the many examples that I see of growth management working well in communities.

Two communities in particular, Everett and Mill Creek, are now seeing the benefits of years of efforts in planning and regulatory reform. Both used planned actions under the 1995 Regulatory Reform Act, combining comprehensive planning with up-front environmental review that reduces or eliminates further review for individual projects when they are proposed consistent with the plan.

When The Boeing Company decided to request proposals for a site to build its new 7E7 airliner, Everett was ready with its Southwest Everett Subarea Plan and Planned Action Ordinance.

"The fact is that the work we did for Boeing and Southwest Everett under the planned action provisions were essential for landing the 7E7," said Paul Roberts, former planning director for Everett. "We could not have made the commitments we made without this work having been done ten years in advance."

Everett worked with Boeing from 1991-1993 to develop the concepts for planned actions — to develop as much pre-approved development capacity as possible, according to Roberts. The city then worked with the Governor's Task Force on Regulatory Reform, resulting in this approach being incorporated into the 1995 Regulatory Reform legislation. CTED helped fund their work with one of the original Planning and Environmental Review

The 7E7 project may have some additional work required in environmental review, but substantial savings in permit processing time will occur under the planned action process, Roberts added. "The Southwest Everett Plan has helped to break through the complex and often inefficient land use regulatory system and realize the promise of the GMA: better planning and more efficient and timely permitting."

In Mill Creek, the Town Center that the city began planning for in the early 1990s is now becoming a reality. Attractive multifamily developments, including a low-income housing complex, border the center. Residents will soon be able to walk to a grocery store, restaurants, a fitness center, and other retail outlets (all currently under construction). The Town Center and new residential neighborhoods border North Creek. A pedestrian-bicycle trail winds along the wetland buffer's edge. Protecting North Creek and its wetlands was an important part of the city's planning for the area.

GMA Update efforts offer local governments an opportunity to review their growth management work and determine if current plans and regulations are doing the job in achieving the community's vision, as they have in Everett and Mill Creek.

A few communities with the deadline of December I, 2004, to review and update their plans and regulations for GMA compliance have

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Important earthquake planning tools ready

Preliminary statewide National Earthquake Hazards Reduction Program (NEHRP) soiltype and liquefaction-susceptibility maps are available for download in PDF and geographic information system (GIS) formats from the Washington State Department of Natural Resources, Division of Geology and Earth Resources (DGER). Final versions of these maps will be ready in the fall. Maps for many highly populated areas of the state contain detailed information. More areas of the state may receive detailed study over the next several years, subject to funding.

To obtain copies of the preliminary maps, contact Rebecca Niggemann at rebecca.niggema nn@wadnr.gov or 360-902-1442.

For other online maps and general geologic information, check http://www.dnr.wa.gov/ geology/.

To review DGER's publications list, see http: //www.dnr.wa.gov/geology/pubs/publist.htm.

A searchable bibliography of Washington geology is available at http://www.dnr.wa.gov/ geology/washbib.htm.

Making a plan for planning key in **Whatcom County update**

By Matt Aamot Whatcom County Senior Planner

n November 30, "Planner Bob" drinks his morning coffee and reviews his "to do list" for the day. He notices an obscure item scribbled at the bottom of his list: "Start Comp Plan amendments (to be finished no later than December I)." Planner Bob panics when he realizes that the state-imposed GMA deadline for updating the comprehensive plan is tomorrow. In a cold sweat, Planner Bob wakes up and discovers it's all a bad dream. It's really May and he has plenty of time. Back to bed he goes, content in the knowledge that it's really going to be O.K. after all.

State deadlines for updating comprehensive plans always seem to sneak up on us and there never seems to be enough time to comply. Planners are busy reviewing development proposals, taking phone calls, dealing with the "emergency of the day," working with committees, and trying to squeeze in long-range planning duties. It's difficult trying to balance all of these tasks and meet the deadlines, but it doesn't have to turn into "Planner Bob's nightmare."

Whatcom County has incorporated three concepts into our planning process in an attempt to meet state deadlines:

- Develop a "plan for planning."
- Focus the purpose of our update.
- Staff collaboration.

Plan for planning

In the mid-1980s when I was attending Western Washington University, one of my planning professors stressed that we should always have a "plan for planning." I still have one of these old plans, which is really nothing more than a calendar with assignments and a series of planned tasks that must be accomplished in an orderly fashion to achieve the intended goal on time.

In Whatcom County, we developed a plan for planning several years ago to help us meet the state's deadline for updating our comprehensive plan. We split the comprehensive plan into three sections and decided to review one section in 2002, one section in 2003, and one section in 2004. This formed the framework for our plan for planning.

Focused purpose

Whatcom County's Comprehensive Plan was originally adopted in 1997 after a long and intense process of community involvement, committee meetings, planning commission review, and county council adoption. We made a decision with our update to give respect and deference to that original process. We were not going to "reinvent the wheel." Rather, we focused our review on GMA compliance, incorporating county policy direction that had changed since 1997 and updating factual information.

Staff collaboration

Whatcom County has II people on our long-range planning staff including GIS and clerical support. The staff has really functioned well together, working very hard and pitching in where help is needed. While this may be an "intangible" trait of our staff, it sure has helped us to get the job done.

Although this approach is not "rocket science," planning ahead, focus, and collaboration have placed Whatcom County on a path to substantially comply with the GMA deadlines for updating our comp plan.

Sleep tight Planner Bob!

Vision statements guide Washougal's GMA Update

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overall county-wide collaborative planning process. As directed by the Board of County Commissioners, one 20-acre Camas School District site was included within Washougal's urban growth boundary, making a small change to the city's urban growth area.

Two consultants assisted Washougal staff in preparing the city's GMA Update. This assistance helped the city review its comprehensive plan, without hiring additional staff.

"It is important that we focus on the tasks and do the best that we can and not lose sight of our goals," said Mayor Jeff Guard at a recent planning commission meeting. "We have a great community vision for Washougal, now all we need to do is get there."

Everett's Boeing 7E7 project and Mill Creek **Town Center show** benefits of keeping **GMA plans, regulations** up to date

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completed their work. At press time, they are Clyde Hill, Kenmore, and Lynnwood.

Other communities are working to complete their work by the deadline. We've asked communities that have completed or are well underway with their update work to write articles for this issue of About Growth on how they decided what to update and their update process. Some have offered advice to those who are having difficulty getting started and those who have deadlines in later years.

Please remember when you have completed your GMA Update that the legislative body of the city or county is required to adopt a resolution or ordinance indicating that the local government has completed its review and update, if an update was necessary (RCW 36.70A.130). CTED must receive a copy of that document so that we can keep our database up to date on which communities have meet the review requirements.

A number of the communities interviewed for this newsletter indicated that Growth Management Services' materials, including comprehensive plan and development regulation checklists and technical assistance bulletins, were helpful in their update work. For copies, see www.cted.wa.gov/growth or call 360-725-3000. Regional planners also are available to offer technical assistance to communities.

Several of the local governments interviewed pointed out that by updating their plan annually since its original adoption and amending related regulations, they were in good shape for doing the GMA Update work. This points out how consistent planning through the years can help communities carry out their visions. It's this focus on carrying out the community's vision that helped Everett and Mill Creek achieve the benefits of early planning under the GMA.

Communities use variety of approaches in GMA Update work

By Rita R. Robison, AICP

About Growth Editor

irroring other growth management actions, the state's local governments are using a variety of methods to accomplish the first required updates to comprehensive plans and development regulations since the GMA was passed.

Among the ten communities interviewed for this article, most are using their planning commissions to do the bulk of the review of plans and regulations. Some, such as Bellevue and Camas, also organized citizens' advisory committees. Many of the local governments took an update plan to the council or commission along the way to make sure the elected officials could have early input and were kept up to date. Most of the communities are going through the comprehensive plan element-by-element. A few are dividing update work into topics.

When Kent reviewed its Housing Element, a workshop was offered on innovative housing techniques such as cottage housing and clustering. A preference survey on housing density in existing neighborhoods was offered. "They liked what they saw," said Gloria Gould-Wessen, AICP, GIS coordinator and planner for Kent. "Good quality development was appealing to them."

In addition to public meetings, a variety of public participation techniques are being used by the ten communities, including workshops, open houses, flyers, and information posted on Web sites. Yacolt developed a 16-page synopsis of its comprehensive plan update.

Kent is updating policies and demographic information and addressing new growth management requirements. Bellevue and Covington have updated their downtown plans. Tacoma is examining the policies, mapping, and allowable densities for its historic district. Bellevue, Thurston County, and Tacoma are working on critical areas ordinances.

Clyde Hill, Camas, and Yacolt hired consultants to help with their updates. Bellevue hired consultants to assist in its work on critical areas and the downtown plan.

In Yacolt, a remote, fourth-class town, the town council is the planning



Kent's workshop on innovative housing techniques draws community interest.

PHOTO COURTESY OF THE CITY OF KENT

commission. The town used the GMA Update process to reexamine the framework for the comprehensive plan and to plan for capital facilities, including continuing to work on the steps toward funding a sewer system.

Gould-Wessen suggests that if a local government hasn't started its update, they should pare down their work program to the bare essentials necessary to ensure their plan and regulations comply with the GMA.

Several of the planners interviewed suggested staff use CTED's technical assistance bulletins and checklists in their update work.

Kathleen Burgess, Bellevue comprehensive planning manager, suggests communities who are just beginning should develop a clear scope of work. "Get a sign off from the city council at each point."

Bellevue plans to complete its GMA Update by the December I deadline. "It will be tight," Burgess said. "It's a big undertaking. We have a lot of staff dedicated to it."

"Manage your time well," Jennifer Hayes, Thurston County associate planner said, adding "use spreadsheets or software such as Microsoft Project to map out your critical path and identify your 'make it or break it deadlines."

Share your strategy, keep the public and policymakers involved, and communicate with your team, said Hayes. "Make sure everyone shares information along the way."

Donna Stenger, Tacoma urban planner, suggests communities begin their review by looking for things in their comprehensive plans that they have not completed which are required by the GMA. "Everything

doesn't need to be done under this deadline," Stenger said, adding "You can hit it on the next round."

According to representatives of the local governments interviewed, the following went well in their GMA Update process:

- Bellevue: Working with city boards and commissions, other departments, neighboring jurisdictions, and state agencies.
- Olympia: Keeping up with new state laws and needed changes through the years with annual plan amendments, thus reducing the GMA Update workload.
- Thurston County: Starting early with two of the most complex areas, the Natural Environment and Resource Lands elements.
- SeaTac: Taking an early systematic look at the city's plan and regulations. The annual amendment process helped SeaTac keep its plan up to date.
- Covington: Planning for commercial development in an area that is experiencing massive growth.
- Clyde Hill: Using a methodical process and not allowing the task to overwhelm the city.
- Camas: Allowing the city to add specifics to the good set of goals and policies that had been developed for its earlier plan.

Breaking plan into 'packages' helps small city manage update

By Susan Coles Burien Community Development Department Assistant

or a small city, the task of updating the City of Burien's comprehensive plan and development regulations presented a challenge. Burien has two current planners, a senior planner, and a Community Development Department director to serve a population of nearly 31,500. Fortunately, city officials decided to bring in a consulting firm to assist with the update.

"The support of the city council and City Manager Gary Long was essential to us completing this update in a timely manner with a minimum of disruption to our

regular workload," said Scott Greenberg, director, Burien Community Development Department. "Having EDAW and its subcontractors do much of the legwork left us free to focus on the public input and overall quality of the product and the process."

Burien's first comprehensive plan was adopted in 1997. Conditions in Burien haven't changed much since then, so the city council and staff agreed that a major overhaul of the plan wasn't required.

The task of updating the plan was broken into packages: housing, parks, and open space; land use, utilities, stormwater, and capital facilities; and transportation. A new Economic Development Element was added. The Existing Conditions Element also was updated, and the docketed

amendments were reviewed as packages as well. The task was made simpler by taking advantage of resources the city had at hand, including a recent demographic study.

Much of the consultants' work focused on transportation and writing new development regulations for critical areas, including streams, wildlife conservation areas, wetlands, and aquifer recharge areas. The geological hazard areas had been addressed and updated previously. EDAW also assisted in preparing new graphics for the plan.

A comprehensive plan gap analysis was prepared, giving the planning commission an understanding of what the update would entail. As the update progressed, each package was presented to the planning

commission, which reviewed it in multiple study sessions. The commission held a public hearing on each package before forwarding its recommendation to the city council. The process was repeated at the council level, study sessions followed by public hearings, and then adoption of the combination of packages.

The adopted changes to the comprehensive plan include: the designation of downtown Burien as an urban center; policy support for

a pilot project to test innovative, affordable designs for multifamily development; an update of transportation level of service standards; the inclusion of the city's planned Town Square in the Community Character Element; and an update of the Stormwater Element supporting and encouraging the use of low impact development approaches to solving stormwater issues.

Breaking the updates down into workable packages, hiring EDAW to assist in the preparation of the document, and working with a recently adopted plan that didn't require a major overhaul contributed to a positive update process for the City of Burien.







Community values in a GMA Update

By Rohn Amegatcher Woodinville Planning Commissioner

s a planning commissioner in a quaint and thriving suburban city of roughly 10,000 people, one of the most important assignments I've had the privilege of participating in was the recent City of Woodinville GMA Update. With its comprehensive plan originally adopted in 1996, the city set out in 2001 to perform this duty.

We wanted the updated comprehensive plan to capture and reflect the vision, values, and interests of our community, including the diverse needs of our citizens and stakeholders, prior to being submitted to the city council for consideration and adoption. We began by putting a call out to the community for local business people, property owners, and citizens to serve on planning commission subcommittees named

citizen advisory panels. Each panel included two planning commissioners, a chair, a vice-chair, consultants (where appropriate), and a city staff member to facilitate the deliberations and provide input on technical and code topics. We formed eight panels, each given the specific responsibility by the planning commission for revising, drafting, and updating the goals, policies, needs, issues, and alternatives for one of the elements of the overall document.

The meetings went well. They were organized to allow for the free flow of ideas, brisk discussion of the content, and the reasoning behind each component of the elements. The diversity of interests and perspectives represented in the panels allowed for items such as the broader goals, general policies, and implementation strategies to be examined prior to being presented to the full planning commission, formal public hearing process, and city council. "We got

through the whole chapter with no stone unturned," a former planning commission chair said when asked for his feedback on the panel he joined.

Before forming the panels, the planning commission decided to separate and delay the work on codes and regulations so that the vision the community expressed in the first phase of the update could be reflected in these implementation documents. Citizen participation was a crucial part of our process along with the extensive knowledge and experience of our city planning staff, boards, commissions, and the city council.

Cities that undertake comprehensive plan updates should strongly consider adopting a grassroots process such as Woodinville's. The end result for Woodinville has been an organic and organized plan that we own. It accommodates our values, our long-term growth vision, and the thinking within our community.



Members of the planning commission worked with citizen advisory panels to capture the vision and values of Woodinville as part of the city's GMA Update.



Early start helps Lynnwood complete GMA Update



Part of Lynnwood's GMA update included a review of park facilities, such as Heritage Park, which preserves the city's history and some of its oldest structures, including the Wickers Building

PHOTO COURTESY OF THE CITY OF LYNNWOOD

By Ron Hough **Lynnwood Planning Manager**

ynnwood adopted its first GMA comprehensive plan in 1995. As soon as a five-year update to be completed by the September I, 2002, deadline.

We continued to process amendments on an annual basis and, when the update deadline was pushed to 2004, we continued to follow our adopted schedule. Knowing that Snohomish County would be dealing with growth allocation issues in a few years, we wanted to get ahead of the game and fine-tune our plan so we could provide the county with good build-out, population, and employment figures.

We began our first major review in late 1999. A Citizen Involvement Program was one of the most important components and was developed first. We used our planning commission as the primary forum for open public discussions of all plan-related matters. That worked very well. Guidelines were also established for public communication, meetings, and advertising.

Another early step was a checklist comparison of our plan with the GMA to make sure that the plan included all the required parts and, if not, to identify what needed to be fixed or added. The city's 1995 adopted goals were then reviewed through

a public visioning process hosted by the planning commission. The new 2020 Vision for Lynnwood provided the guidance for the plan review.

During the first half of 2000, a series of planning commission and neighborhood meetings were offered to discuss the details of each major element of the plan and to propose corrections or improvements. Our greatest challenge was to correct inconsistencies that dated back to the 1995 adoption. A citywide consistency review discovered 462 properties throughout the city with plan/zone conflicts. The staff time and notification process far exceeded expectations and, as a result, the review process had to be continued into 2001.

Our planning commission was heavily involved early in the process as the inventory work was being analyzed and proposals were being developed and fine-tuned. By the summer of 2001, all proposals were being considered by the city council. During its work over the two-year period, the council discussed the plan amendments in 41 different work sessions and public hearings.

By the time the updated plan was adopted in October 2001, all elements had been thoroughly reviewed and updated. In addition to the mandatory elements, the city added several optional elements, including Parks, Recreation, and Open Space;

Cultural and Historic Resources; Economic Development; and Implementation.

A unique feature of this process was Lynnwood's pilot participation in the development and testing of a proposed State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA) nonproject review form. That exercise required considerably more staff time, but produced SEPA documentation of citywide land use alternatives that was interesting and useful to those involved in the update process.

Updating the plan was an arduous twoyear process. It didn't leave much time to ensure that our development regulations were consistent. So, during 2002, we conducted a thorough review of regulations. A number of amendments were made to bring them into consistency with the updated comprehensive plan. That process was completed with adoption of code amendments in November 2002.

Since Lynnwood recently completed a major plan and code review, we're not required to do another one until 2011. However, we will continue to make needed improvements through our annual amendment process. This year we'll be updating our critical areas ordinance, working on the Shoreline Master Program, and continuing to review and improve our development regulations.

Rural county carries out plan for growth management update

By Steve Gray Clallam County Senior Planner

fforts are underway in Clallam County to evaluate our comprehensive plan and development regulations for compliance with the GMA. This is our first broad review of our plan and regulations since plan adoption in 1995.

Our 2004 planning process consists of four basic phases:

PHASE I: Implement our Public

Participation Program.

PHASE II: Preparation of compliance

checklists.

PHASE III: Hold public hearings to "scope"

needed updates.

PHASE IV: Amendments (as needed).

Key public participation efforts to date include: (I) distributing several hundred comprehensive plan pamphlets; (2) mailing an information flier with property tax statements; (3) holding four regional open houses; and (4) developing a GMA Web page.

Phase II efforts now underway include preparing a growth monitoring report (1990 to 2003) and compliance checklists. Our GIS is being used to link parcel-based building and land division permit activity to our designated urban, rural, and resource lands. We are using state comprehensive plan and development checklists and a Transportation Element checklist prepared by the Peninsula Regional Transportation

Planning Organization to review our plan and regulations.

During Phase III, our planning commission will conduct four regional public hearings (April/May) to gather and consider public input on areas of the comprehensive plan and/or development regulations that should be updated. It is anticipated they will submit their findings and recommendations to the Board of County Commissioners in June.

The board will conduct at least one public hearing to gather additional public input for development of a GMA compliance resolution. The resolution will document findings regarding GMA compliance and establish a work schedule for updates (as needed) to comply with state law or meet local needs.

Phase IV will include addressing any needed amendments consistent with the GMA compliance resolution. Any amendments identified to comply with the state update deadline of December I, 2004, will take priority. This phase will include action on three comprehensive plan land use and zoning map amendment applications that were rolled into our overall GMA review and update.

Similar to other local jurisdictions our current 1995 plan represents a 20-year plan. Our advice is that the update process should not be used to rehash every goal, policy, and/or other choices made in preparation and implementation of current plans.

For more information, visit our homepage at *www.clallam.net* (follow links for 2004 GMA Evaluation and Update).

Transportations options for growth management updates

ooking for a way to change your development regulations to better support transportation choices besides the automobile?

A new publication, *Strategies and Tools to Implement Transportation-Efficient Development: A Reference Manual*, could help.

Available from the Urban Planning Office at the Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT), the manual offers strategies that communities can use to create a transportation-efficient built environment — one that supports carpools, transit, and nonmotorized travel modes.

The manual's strategies can help carry out policies such as concentrating urban development/redevelopment in centers, increasing the supply and diversity of housing, and creating pedestrian-supportive environments. In addition, the manual discusses financial strategies that can increase the economic viability of such projects for developers and property owners. The manual includes sample code language, which can be copied or modified as necessary.

The manual is available electronically at www.wsdot.wa.gov/mobility/TDM/TDMpubl.html. To obtain a print copy or CD or to find out more about the project, contact Sarah Kavage at 206-464-1267 or kavages@wsdot.wa.gov.

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